



City of Atlanta

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Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs

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Dianne Harnell Cohen, Commissioner

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City of Atlanta, watch City Channel 26 or visit us online at www.atlantaga.gov.



City of Atlanta
Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs
2005 Annual Report



January 2006

Greetings,

2005 was a remarkable year, a turning point, for the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. Atlanta residents and visitors were able to enjoy increased maintenance in our 348 city parks, increased programming in our 33 recreation facilities and a multitude of cultural programming and activities.

We are very proud that projects such as the Beltline, the \$105 million Greenspace and Recreation Opportunity Bond, and the Master Plan to increase Piedmont Park by 53 acres all received Council approval. These major accomplishments will allow us to increase public greenspace, and provide much needed capital improvements to our existing facilities. We thank all of our supporters for recognizing the importance of greenspace and facility maintenance.

There is no denying that all of the accomplishments outlined in this report are attributed to our engaged and committed staff, charitable community and corporate partners, and selfless volunteers. We pledge to strive continuously towards enhancing our parks, acres of greenspace, recreational facilities, amenities, cultural programs and activities.

"Every day is an Opening Day" at our parks and recreation centers. We invite you to experience what the City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs has to offer!

Dianne Harnell Cohen, Commissioner
Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs



Financials

2005 General Fund Allocation*

Personnel	\$18,209,894
Other Operating Revenues	3,808,406
Capital	<u>1,184,000</u>
Total Revenues	\$23,202,300

2004 General Fund Allocation*

Personnel	\$17,539,455
Other Operating Expenses	3,783,123
Capital	<u>789,806</u>
Total Revenues	\$22,112,384

* Does not include internal services or promotion of tourism.



Recreation & Cultural Affairs: Ongoing Activities & Programs

Adult Programs & Activities

Afterschool Programming

Aquatic Programs and Activities

Atlanta Jazz Festival

ARTSCool

Camp Best Friends Summer Program

Chris Silva Swim Meet

Golden Age Club Activities for Seniors

PRE'SCool

Senior Olympics

Special Olympics

Summer Murals

Teen Week

Therapeutics

Youth Sports



MISSION

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs is to provide all residents and visitors with the highest quality parks, facilities, recreational programs and cultural experiences.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Safe, well maintained abundant park system.
- Accessible recreational program opportunities for youth, teens and seniors.
- Diverse arts and cultural experiences.
- State of the art facilities.
- Engaged and committed staff.

DEPARTMENT FACILITIES

- 348 Parks
- 33 Recreation Centers
- 22 Swimming Facilities including 5 natatoriums
- 182 Tennis Courts
- 6 Golf Courses
- 111 Playgrounds
- 85 Ball Fields
- 20 Pavilions
- 1 Arts Center
- 2 Art Galleries
- 3 Neighborhood Centers
- 2 Entertainment Venues
- Cyclorama & Civil War Museum
- Historic Cemetery



2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Park & Recreation Standards** - Parks and recreation standards are submitted by maintenance crews and recreation staff. This past year, park standards were reviewed by supervisors and managers then evaluated by an independent task force of Park Pride. A monthly Park of the Month award was presented and a Park of the Year award was presented concluding the parks season. The competition among crews for this coveted award has resulted in significant improvement in the care and nurturing of our parks. Beginning in 2006, a Recreation Center of the Quarter will be presented.
- **Park Acreage** - The department was able to successfully add acreage to parks inventory at the following locations: Mantissa/Underwood Hills; Herbert Taylor Park; Morningside Nature Preserve; Spink-Collins Park; and Chattahoochee River Park.
- **Greenspace & Recreation Opportunity Bond** - Successfully introduced the 2005 Greenspace and Recreation Opportunity Bond. Unanimously approved by Atlanta City Council, \$105 million in bonds will be directed towards land acquisitions, new recreation amenities and badly needed infrastructure improvements. In addition, greenspace and bike trails will be added along the Beltline project.
- **Community Involvement** - The Parks Chair Committee marked its 3rd successful year in which representatives from the Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU's), Office of Parks staff and the Commissioner's Office met quarterly to participate in education sessions and presentations regarding parks and greenspace and forums to discuss concerns, make suggestions and to specifically meet and communicate with the Park District Maintenance Supervisors.



Atlanta Stakeholders have their say on the DPRCA!

The Parks Community Weighs In...

"The maintenance of all the parks have improved thanks to the park of the month program."

Chris Nelson, Piedmont Park Conservancy

"I have noticed changes in Piedmont Park for the past 25 years. I understand why event organizers were being asked to exercise such care in the park. We noticed the park looks better and we will do our part to make sure the park remains that way."

Donna Narduchi, Atlanta Pride Committee

"I just wanted to drop you a line to recognize the good work the maintenance team has done with Freedom Park and specifically Art in Freedom Park. The rain has made it hard for our volunteers (and I am sure parks department personnel) to keep things mowed. That being said, I feel your staff has gone beyond expectations to help us out by trimming close to some of the pieces. Please pass on our thanks to the crew."

Eric Dusenbury, Director, Art in Freedom Park

"The crew's courteous and timely response in removing branches and loads of debris at the Wildwood Gardens Park ravine makes one proud of city employees. Thanks for the swift action!"

Alex Watson, resident

"I want to thank everyone involved for getting the work done on the grounds of West Manor Park. The grass was cut and work was done on the infield. The kids were so happy to be outside playing. Keep up the good work!"

Rhett Jackson, Sr., resident

"I would like to thank the City crew that mowed and trimmed Springvale Park. They did a great job!"

Frank Shults, resident



2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Community Cultural Plan** - The Office of Cultural Affairs successfully completed the Community Cultural Plan – a new roadmap for the Office of Cultural Affairs - representing an agenda for the future development of arts, cultural programs and resources in the City. Over 200 stakeholders such as artists, civic leaders, cultural representatives and residents attended open forums. Over 1000 responded to either the web-based or printed surveys to gauge cultural needs.
- **Atlanta Civic Center Improvements** - The Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center received capital improvements including the renovation of the lobby areas, new dimmer lights in the theatre and fountain repairs. The facility continues to maintain its position as one of the premiere arts and entertainment venue in the metro Atlanta area, serving as host for notable figures and over 200 special events, plus launching a new website.
- **Atlanta Civic Center Revenue Generation** - The Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center generated \$1.4 million in revenues, exceeding its total revenue target for the year by 14%. This amount includes rentals, land lease, concessions and parking. The facility also increased event bookings for the month of December by 48% compared to last year.
- **Network Technology** - The Management Services Office – IT Division initiated a connectivity project to ensure network technology was made available to various offsite recreation facilities to improve communications within the department. A total of 25 sites were connected. Prior to the project, only 5 were connected.
- **Software Training** - The Management Services Office implemented computer training courses for employees in need of improving software skills. 113 employees received assistance in software programs such as Microsoft Office 2003, Microsoft Project and Microsoft Outlook.



2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **North Woods Master Plan** - The North Woods Master Plan was approved and will add 53 acres of greenspace to Piedmont Park.
- **Award of Excellence** - The department received the “Award of Excellence in Playground Safety” from the Keenan’s Kids Foundation in recognition for applying recommendations from the 2003 & 2004 Playground Safety Report and creating a model for playground safety. As a result, over 30 unfavorable playgrounds were systematically redesigned, reconstructed or completely removed.
- **Playground Safety** - The department partnered with Home Depot, Hands on Atlanta and KaBoom! to kick-off Playground Safety Day at 15 playgrounds in May. Over 700 volunteers participated in the refurbishment project ensuring various playgrounds would remain safe and clean. The ongoing playground improvement plan included adding additional mulch to surfaces to meet acceptable playground safety standards, cleaning playground equipment, clearing brush, installing trash can receptacles as well as painting and water proofing park amenities. Home Depot has been named “The City’s Official Playground Safety Partner”.
- **Hazardous Tree Removals** - The Office of Parks completed 873 emergency work orders to remove hazardous trees and limbs and 674 work orders to remove downed trees.
- **Arborist Certification** - The Office of Parks arborist Brent Beamon successfully completed the Certified Arborist examination. Administered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) this accomplishment recognized the office as having the only certified arborist in the City of Atlanta in 2005.



2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Park Reservations** - Over 1200 reservations for park pavilions, park activities, ball fields and outdoor weddings were made.
- **Reorganization** - The Office of Park Design successfully reorganized to improve services including bringing more cohesive and timely improvements to the city's parks and recreation facilities. The total reorganization included newly created positions and the acquisition of the Skilled Services Division (formerly operated under the Office of Parks) to further assist with landscape designs, architectural and engineering services, managing capital project improvements for parks and greenspace and providing ongoing maintenance to all recreation facilities.
- **Park & Recreation Improvements** - Several renovation and repair projects totaling \$1.5 million were completed at various parks and recreation centers including complete renovations, roof repairs, tennis court resurfacing and other site improvements.
- **Grants** - The department received direct grants in the amount of \$2.4 million through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation and The Herbert Taylor Family Foundation. Through partner Park Pride, over \$171,000 was raised for park improvement projects with over 27,000 volunteer hours utilized.
- **Aquatics** - Over 67,000 residents and visitors utilized the city's outdoor pools and natatoriums. Also, 34 Aquatic Facility Assistants received CPR for the Professional Rescuer recertification & updates. Successful collaborations included working with Atlanta Public Schools (APS) to utilize facilities for APS swim meets and practices.
- **After School Programming** - The Office of Recreation met their target of enrolling at least 11% of Atlanta Public School students, ages 6 –12, in after school programs for the year.



2005 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Camp Best Friends** - Over 3,800 youth ages 6-16 participated in the Camp Best Friends Summer Program which offers traditional and non-traditional summer camp activities including sports, educational trips, computer instruction, swimming, and performing arts.
- **Emergency Shelters** - The department worked with various city departments and agencies to serve as a shelter and service center during 3 emergencies. Adamsville Recreation Center was designated as a shelter during a January ice storm and served as both a shelter and service center for Gulf Coast residents displaced by Hurricane Katrina in August. Over 17,000 evacuees utilized the services offered at the facility. In addition, Ben Hill Recreation Center served as a shelter for over 100 residents displaced by an apartment fire in November.
- **Strategic ACTS** - The Office of Recreation created and implemented "Strategic ACTS" to manage and monitor the following priorities: **Afterschool Programming**, **Camp Best Friends**, **Teens & Seniors**.
- **AED Installation** - Through a donation from Piedmont Hospital, the department was able to purchase 68 automated external defibrillators (AED's). The donation enabled the installation of AED's at each of the recreation centers to assist in emergency cardiac situations and help save lives.
- **Special Olympics** - Through a collaboration with Atlanta Public Schools, the department's Therapeutics division was able to serve 525 elementary and high school students through the Special Olympics. Students participated in track and field, swimming, floor hockey, motor skills, and tennis activities.
- **Cultural Experience Project** - The Office of Cultural Affairs implemented the Cultural Experience Project in collaboration with Atlanta Public Schools and public-private partners, assuring that every single student from Pre K-12th grade will visit various cultural and arts venues as part of their curriculum each year for free.